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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4648
INFO RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 2135
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 7832
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 3913
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY 0728
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 2931
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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THE HAGUE FOR FAS:ROGER WENTZEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EFIS](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: NORWEGIANS DIFFUSE THREATENED RUSSIAN FISH EXPORT
BAN

REF: A. MOSCOW 10364
[1](#)B. OSLO 583

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Russian authorities will not place a ban on all Norwegian seafood following discussions between Norwegian and Russian food safety authorities. Russian veterinary officials threatened to ban all fish exports from Norway as of October 1 following their discovery of forged Norwegian veterinary inspection certificates in some shipments of Norwegian seafood on September 7. Norwegians will implement new tamper-proof export documentation by October 15. A ban on import of Norwegian salmon from un-approved facilities remains in effect. The agreement is very good news for the Norwegian seafood industry which retains access to its largest market. It is also good news for the Norwegian government, which has shown that it can respond quickly and effectively to Russian trade concerns.
END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (U) Norwegian Food Safety Authority Director General Joakim Lystad and Norwegian Ambassador to Russia Oyvind Nordsletten met with Russian Veterinary Service Director Yevgeniy Nepoklonov in Moscow on September 21 to discuss a pending ban on all Norwegian seafood exports to Russia. The one-day discussions resulted in an agreement whereby seafood shipments leaving Norway will be sealed to eliminate tampering, and location of the catch, landing, and export information will be delineated. The Norwegians will develop new tamper resistant veterinary certification by October 15. The agreement is subject to pro forma approval by Russian authorities.

[1](#)3. (U) Imports of fresh Norwegian salmon are still restricted to producers who have successfully completed inspections from Russian Veterinary Authority personnel. Norwegian Seafood Export Council officials stated that eight producers has passed inspections that began in May and about 100 other producers still need to be certified. Norwegian firms are required to pay Russian authorities for the inspections.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Some observers saw protectionist or corrupt motives when the possible ban was first announced. Norway is the world's largest producer of farm raised salmon and, in 2005, Norway exported USD 533 million worth of seafood to Russia. Others speculated that the threatened ban had to do with Norway's aggressive monitoring of Russian fishing vessels in waters surrounding the Svalbard archipelago. Norwegian

authorities detained two more Russian fishing vessels last week and charged them with unauthorized off-loading within Norwegian waters.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: Regardless of speculation, Norwegian officials focused on understanding and addressing the issues presented to them by their Russian counterparts. Veterinary, Customs, and Foreign Ministry officials coordinated closely and concentrated discussions in Moscow on addressing the certificate issue. The Norwegians' efforts paid off, and while this may not be the last episode of the Norwegian-Russian fisheries saga, the quick resolution of the issue also showed that Norway's broad engagement with Russia is paying dividends. END COMMENT
WHITNEY